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Matters relating to finance
Further guidance to the Least Developed Countries Fund

Synthesis report on the progress made in the implementation of the remaining elements of the least developed countries work programme

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This report synthesizes the information submitted by one group of Parties, and relevant organizations, on their experiences with the implementation of the remaining elements of the least developed countries work programme. It presents the relevant mandates, scope and possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation. It also presents a background to the topic, some general points raised and information on options to meet country-driven needs. The report then synthesizes the information on the progress made in the implementation of the remaining elements of the least developed countries work programme, and ends with a brief conclusion.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its seventeenth session, requested the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to provide further specifications on each of the elements of the least developed countries (LDCs) work programme other than the national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), in consultation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and to report to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), at its thirty-sixth session, with a view to informing the COP on the guidance to be provided to the GEF on support for the implementation of the elements of the LDC work programme other than the NAPAs.[1] The LEG undertook this work at its twenty-first session and also proposed options to meet country-driven needs. The expert group reported on its work in its report to the SBI.[2]

2. COP 18 invited Parties and relevant organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 1 August 2014, information on their experiences with the implementation of the remaining elements of the LDC work programme, considering the options contained in the report on the twenty-first meeting of the LEG, for compilation by the secretariat into a miscellaneous document[3] for consideration at SBI 41.[4]

3. At the same session, the COP requested the secretariat to prepare a synthesis report on this matter, for consideration at SBI 41.[5]

B. Scope of the note

4. This report takes into account information from:

(a) A formal submission from Nepal on behalf of LDCs, representing the views of 48 Parties;[6]

(b) The GEF and two of its agencies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

(c) The reports of the LEG, including the report on its twenty-first meeting;

(d) Other relevant sources of information.

5. It begins with a synthesis of the general points raised, and then synthesizes information on options to meet country-driven need.

6. The report then discusses progress made in the implementation of the remaining elements of the LDC work programme, by synthesizing the information received on these elements.

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[1] Decision 9/CP.17, paragraph 2.
[2] FCCC/SBI/2012/7, paragraphs 31–45.
[3] FCCC/SBI/2014/MISC.3.
[4] Decision 10/CP.18, paragraph 8.
[5] Decision 10/CP.18, paragraph 9.
[6] The submission is available at <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/Lists/OSPSubmissionUpload/74_20_130537825019904873-Nepal%20Submission%20on%20Behalf%20of%20LDCs%20LDCF%20[final].pdf>.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

7. SBI 41 may wish to consider the information contained in this document in its consideration of further guidance to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF).

II. Background

8. The LDC work programme, established by decision 5/CP.7, contains the following elements:

(a) Strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing, national climate change secretariats and/or focal points to enable the effective implementation of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol in LDCs;

(b) Providing training, on an ongoing basis, in negotiation skills and language, where needed, to develop the capacity of negotiators from LDCs to participate effectively in the climate change process;

(c) Supporting the preparation of NAPAs;

(d) Promotion of public awareness programmes to ensure the dissemination of information on climate change issues;

(e) Development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7);

(f) Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate weather and climate information to support the implementation of NAPAs.

9. Further specifications on each of the elements above of the LDC work programme other than the NAPA process were discussed by the LEG and the GEF at the twenty-first meeting of the LEG.

III. Synthesis of general views raised

10. The least developed countries acknowledged the work of the GEF in preparing a user-friendly guide for accessing resources and streamlining the project cycle.[7] It also noted that the time needed to approve and endorse NAPA implementation projects has been reduced. The group suggested that the time frame of the project cycle be further reduced in order to address the urgent and immediate needs of LDCs.

11. The least developed countries expressed their concern about the limited focus to support the preparation of NAPAs alone and noted that support should be extended to the entire LDC work programme, as well as the formulation and implementation of the national adaptation plans.

12. Furthermore, the group noted its concern about delays in communication between countries and the GEF implementing agencies, recommending that the agencies enhance their communication with the recipient countries to ensure the timely implementation of NAPAs and other elements of the LDC work programme.

[7] The guide is available at <http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/23469_LDCF.pdf>.

13. The least developed countries noted the lack of resources to support the implementation of projects under NAPAs and other elements of the LDC work programme. As a result, it recommended that the GEF should take all necessary and appropriate actions to raise awareness about the urgency of the need for adequate and predictable resources for the LDCF. The group added that Parties included in Annex II to the Convention, and other Parties that are in a position to do so, should urgently provide additional funding to address the challenges and immediate needs of LDCs. Information on the status of the LDCF is available in the annex.

14. The LEG noted that some activities related to elements of the LDC programme other than NAPA preparation have been partially supported, including through bilateral support. It suggested that there is still an opportunity for the GEF to contribute to ongoing efforts as a means of catalysing continuous and predictable support from the international community.

15. The least developed countries also recommended that the GEF should seek ways to strengthen collaboration with the Green Climate Fund to channel resources that would enable LDCs to finance the remaining NAPA projects.

16. The least developed countries discussed the need for further information sharing, noting that there are various projects that are being implemented through the LDCF. It recommended that the GEF should facilitate initiatives that encourage best practices and the sharing of information so that countries could benefit from the valuable practical experiences of others. This would be most relevant at the regional level.

IV. Options to meet country-driven needs

17. The LEG noted that different elements of the LDC work programme hold different levels of priority for different countries, and the decision on which activities to implement should be made by the country in question.

18. In relation to linkages with other processes, the LEG noted that enabling activities such as the preparation of national communications and technology needs assessments could have helped to address some of the needs under the remaining elements of the work programme.

19. The GEF reported that the elements of the LDC work programme, other than NAPAs, are supported under the LDCF through projects and programmes that support the implementation of NAPAs.

20. The LEG discussed the fact that mandates had been given to the GEF to provide funding for the remaining elements of the LDC work programme. In this context, it proposed the following options, which are not mutually-exclusive, to meet country-driven needs:

(a) Enabling activities that could be part of a global programme (projects by one or several GEF agencies) for all LDCs with support provided to each country based on their prioritization of the elements of the LDC work programme. The least developed countries, in their submission, also included this option as one of the recommendations to meet country-driven needs;

(b) Medium- or full-sized projects based on the LDCF resources available to each LDC using existing modalities for implementing NAPA priorities. The least developed countries noted that the LDCF should encourage medium- or full-sized projects for LDCs to access funding for the implementation of the LDC work programme. The group also stressed that the LDCF should allow LDCs to follow a dynamic implementation

of their NAPAs by supporting programmatic approaches instead of individual projects. The group added that it should allow for establishing strong national support systems to ensure the best results;

(c) Whenever it is possible and practical, the GEF could also facilitate direct access by LDCs for the implementation of the other elements of the LDC work programme other than the NAPA. In the submission, LDCs proposed that the LDCF should enhance enabling activities for LDCs to be able to better access funds by using the direct access modality. The group added that this would expedite the implementation of projects and also promote country ownership.

V. Progress made in the implementation of the remaining elements of the least developed countries work programme

A. Strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing, national climate change secretariats and/or focal points

21. The LEG identified a need to provide adequate support to countries to enable them to strengthen their climate change secretariats. It highlighted the need for a permanent or at least a long-term financial support for a secretariat or unit that handles climate change matters on a full-time basis. In some cases, this could be combined with oversight of other conventions.

22. The LEG noted that the completion of many initial national communications from LDCs was used as the basis for establishing their climate change secretariats. Many LDCs established a national secretariat to oversee the national communication as well as to manage the NAPA preparation process. The LEG also noted that the existing secretariats were at different stages of development.

23. In the submission, LDCs noted that the LDCF should continue to encourage proponents to set aside a specific percentage of their project budgets and provide additional resources where needed, to support the activities of national climate change secretariats/UNFCCC focal points.

24. The LEG suggested that the GEF could contribute to such efforts by developing, in collaboration with its agencies, a global programme with a strong component on training aimed at strengthening the capacity of existing climate change secretariats with regard to the implementation of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. It recommended that the GEF should seek good practices that could be replicated by looking at models of secretariat support from other multilateral environmental agreements and Conventions, including the Montreal Protocol.

25. The GEF, UNDP and UNEP reported that a full-sized project has been endorsed[8] for "Building capacity for LDCs to participate effectively in intergovernmental climate change processes", with a total amount of USD 4.54 million under the LDCF. UNDP and UNEP reported that they worked together on the development of the project, undertaking consultations with LDCs and other relevant stakeholders.

26. The project aims to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of LDCs for more effective participation in intergovernmental climate change processes, and coordination of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. The project is structured around the following components:

[8] Submitted in July 2014 and endorsed on 7 August 2014 by the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF.

(a) Enhancing the capacity of LDCs to participate effectively in intergovernmental climate change processes;

(b) Strengthening the capacity of LDCs to collect, analyse, interpret and archive climate change data and information;

(c) Generating and disseminating knowledge products, including through training as well as South–South and North–South exchange.

27. The GEF reported that the project addresses important gaps in how the GEF, through the LDCF, along with other relevant organizations have addressed this element of the LDC work programme. In addition, it addresses the element on "Providing training, on an ongoing basis, in negotiating skills and language, where needed, to develop the capacity of negotiators from LDCs to participate effectively in the climate change process" (para. 32 below).

28. The GEF also reported that the project complements ongoing LDCF projects that contribute significantly towards the technical and institutional capacities and policy frameworks of LDCs with a view to supporting NAPA implementation and advancing the NAP process.

B. Providing training, on an ongoing basis, in negotiation skills and language

29. The LEG noted that there are past and ongoing initiatives that provide training sessions and capacity-building for developing countries including LDCs, but that there are still LDCs whose needs had not been met. These LDCs would like to receive further training in negotiation skills and language.

30. It was further noted that the following are also relevant:

(a) Means to equip climate change negotiators with up-to-date information on major issues under discussion in the intergovernmental process;

(b) Support to initiatives that aim to improve the language skills of climate change negotiators, including fellowship programmes and online language courses.

31. The LEG noted that those LDCs that have remaining needs with respect to this element of the LDC work programme should, with the assistance of the GEF and its agencies, prioritize and communicate such needs for expedited support, including through a dedicated support programme.

32. The GEF full-sized project: "Building capacity for LDCs to participate effectively in intergovernmental climate change processes", mentioned in paragraphs 25–28 above, also seeks to address this element of the LDC work programme.

C. Promotion of public awareness programmes

33. The LEG noted that public awareness programmes on climate change in LDCs could build on the lessons learned from the work based on Article 6 of the Convention. This means that the following could be undertaken:

(a) Strengthening of existing channels for promoting awareness of climate change issues;

(b) Developing and implementing awareness programmes: either education programmes (both formal and informal education) or training programmes for groups with a key role in climate change education and communication (e.g. teachers and journalists);

(c) Facilitating public access to information on climate change through websites, flyers, newsletters, etc., with translation into local languages.

34. The LEG also noted that the lack of financial resources poses a significant challenge. This is particularly true with regards to expanding outreach activities from NAPA project locations to other regions of a country. The expert group added that contributions could be sourced from each NAPA/adaptation project towards a national pool to support nationwide activities on outreach.

35. The GEF reported that existing LDCF projects systematically incorporate activities that promote public awareness and ensure the dissemination of information on climate change issues. Of the 95 projects that had been endorsed or approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF, as at 15 September 2014, 55 are providing training to more than 460,000 people on various climate change issues in 35 LDCs. Many more stakeholders are reached by less intensive sensitization and public awareness activities.

D. Development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7)

36. The LEG noted the following activities related to the development and transfer of technology could be undertaken:

(a) Conducting technology needs assessments for adaptation at the national, local and community levels;

(b) Strengthening of a technology enabling environment, including national institutions for technology innovations, and research and technology development;

(c) Capacity-building, including:

(i) The provision of opportunities for training in the use of environmentally sound technologies through demonstration projects;

(ii) The enhancement of skills in the adoption, adaptation, installation, operation and maintenance of specific environmentally sound technologies;

(iii) Training in project development, and the management and operation of climate technologies;

(iv) The improvement of knowledge on energy efficiency and the utilization of renewable energy technologies;

(d) Strengthening or establishing mechanisms for technology transfer in key sectors, including water resources (irrigation, water management), agriculture and food security (integrated soil fertility management, crop and livestock breeding, seed production and storage) and coastal zones (the construction of dykes, afforestation and reforestation of coastal areas).

37. The LEG suggested that support under the LDCF could facilitate initiatives that would encourage the sharing of information, experiences, best practices and know-how in paragraph 36(a–d) above, especially at the regional level. Stand-alone projects of a medium- or full-sized nature could be an ideal format to allow LDCs to access funding for the implementation of this element of the LDC work programme.

38. The GEF reported that this element of the LDC work programme represents an important means through which LDCF projects implement NAPA priorities. All NAPA implementation projects contribute towards the demonstration, deployment and/or dissemination of clearly identifiable adaptation technologies; and many also strengthen the enabling environments for technology transfer through policy and regulatory reform. The GEF has noted that, according to information drawn directly from project documents, different forms of adaptation technology can be found in 93 projects (as at 16 September 2014).

39. The GEF added that during the its fifth cycle, 20 per cent of LDCF financing was identified as directly targeting the transfer of adaptation technology, one of three strategic objectives of the GEF adaptation programme during that replenishment period.

E. Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services

40. In its submission, LDCs suggested that the LDCF should continue to encourage proponents to set aside a specific percentage of the project budget and provide additional resources where needed, towards strengthening national data collection efforts. This is consistent with a proposal by the LEG in which it stated that if this element were implemented, the number of monitoring stations would increase and ongoing support could be sought from local sources or through contributions from new projects.

41. The LEG also suggested exploring how LDCs could identify and package their needs, in particular with regard to facilitating access to climate change data, into a full-sized project to be submitted for funding under the LDCF.

42. The LEG underscored that data collection is fundamental in building an information and knowledge base to support the analysis and decision-making process for adaptation. It noted that little progress had been reported by LDCs in enhancing their capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate relevant information. It also noted that the following could be undertaken:

(a) Strengthening the capacity for making observations which could entail modernization; strengthening and expansion of observational networks and equipment, including remote sensing; and the strengthening of regional instrumentation and calibration centres;

(b) Strengthening telecommunication systems for the transmission of weather and climate data from the observing platforms to the analysis and processing centres;

(c) Capacity-building for forecasting, post-processing and service production systems;

(d) Establishing and/or upgrading data management systems;

(e) Strengthening the efficient communication of climate information from the processing centres to various end users.

43. According to the GEF, support is provided to this element of the LDC work programme through the LDCF. Hydro-meteorological and climate information services are featured as a priority in several NAPAs and, as a result, 11 per cent of all LDCF financing, or USD 98.4 million, has been directed towards enhancing such services as a priority. Altogether, 49 projects in 33 LDCs support hydro-meteorological and climate information services. Ten of the latter projects are on early warning systems in Africa, and are implemented by UNDP and UNEP.

VI. Conclusion

44. This report synthesizes the views of only one group of Parties, LDCs. It provides information received from the GEF and two of its agencies, and includes recommendations and information from the LEG. In this regard, the report does not attempt to present a balanced discussion, but can be considered as one source of relevant information.

Annex

Update on the status of the Least Developed Countries Fund

Summary of the Least Developed Countries Fund as at 15 September 2014

	LDCF
Pledges and contributions	
Total cumulative pledges (USD equivalent)	908 486 331
Total paid contributions (USD)	899 651 226
Project approvals	
Total cumulative funding approvals towards projects and programs (including agency fees) (USD)	882 724 044
Total number of projects	213[a]
Number of countries	51
Projects endorsed or approved by the GEF CEO	
Number of projects	148
Total funding commitments (including agency fee) (USD)	**470 200 633**

Source: Global Environment Facility.

Note: As at 15 September 2014, cumulative pledges to the Least Developed Countries Fund amounted to USD 908.49 million. Of the total resources pledged, USD 899.65 million or 99 per cent had been paid. Resources had been provided by 25 contributing members.

Abbreviations: GEF CEO = Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility, LDCF = Least Developed Countries Fund.

[a] Includes 10 child projects under four programmatic approaches.